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CHAPA Housing Briefs

January 2021



State Updates

Vaccine Distribution Plan Updated to Include Senior Housing as First Priority in Phase II

On January 13, the Baker-Polito Administration made updates to the first priority group in Phase Two of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan to [include residents and staff of low-income and affordable senior housing](#). Similar senior facilities are already receiving vaccines through the Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program (FPPP) as part of Phase 1 of the plan.

Legislature Sends Final Economic Development Bill to Governor Baker

On January 6, the Legislature sent its [final Economic Development Bill](#) to the Governor. The bill includes many transformative housing policies and resources including Housing Choice, zoning for multi-family housing in MBTA communities, and the doubling of the state Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). The Governor has until the end of the week to sign or veto the bill. [Please contact the Governor today and ask him to sign the bill!](#)

Massachusetts Eviction Diversion Pledge Continues to Grow

As of January 5, 67 property owners have committed to an [Eviction Diversion Pledge](#), representing over 140,000 homes across Massachusetts. In November 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration, MassHousing, MACDC, and CHAPA announced an Eviction Diversion Pledge, a commitment from Massachusetts property owners and operators to work with tenants facing financial difficulties because of COVID-19 and supporting housing stability during the ongoing pandemic.

Governor Signs Eviction Protection Law

On December 31, 2020, Governor Baker signed [eviction protection legislation](#). The new law will help tenants better navigate the eviction process, increase awareness of housing assistance resources, and provide better information on eviction diversion programs. Among other changes, the law allows eviction cases to be delayed if there is a pending application for rental assistance and changes eviction notice and reporting requirements.

DHCD Makes Changes to RAFT & ERMA Programs

DHCD has announced [changes to improve the RAFT and Emergency Rental Assistance \(ERMA\) programs](#). The maximum benefit for both programs has been increased to \$10,000. DHCD has also made the maximum RAFT benefit more flexible. Finally, DHCD has created a Rental Assistance Processing Center to help review and process the backlogged RAFT applications.

Eviction Diversion Initiative Dashboard Launched

The Baker-Polito Administration launched an [interactive Eviction Diversion Initiative Dashboard](#) to provide monthly summary statistics about the Massachusetts COVID-19 Eviction Diversion Initiative. The dashboard can be used to view statistics and information for each of the Eviction Diversion Initiative programs.

Governor Signs FY2021 State Budget

In December, Governor Baker signed the [FY2021 state budget](#). The budget contains millions of dollars in increases for affordable housing and homelessness prevention programs, including MRVP, AHVP, RAFT, public housing, and HomeBASE. CHAPA thanks the Legislature and Governor for supporting increased investments in these critical housing resources.



Federal Updates

Massachusetts Receives \$457 Million in Emergency Rental Assistance

On January 11, the U.S. Treasury released its [data and methodology for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#) allocations from the year-end coronavirus relief package. Massachusetts received a maximum state allocation of \$457,129,720.

Treasury Releases Guidance for \$25 Billion in Emergency Rental Assistance from Coronavirus Relief Package

On January 6, the [U.S. Treasury released guidance](#) for the \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance provided in the recent coronavirus relief package. At least 90% of the funds must be used for direct financial assistance, including rental and utilities and home energy costs and arrears.

FY21 Budget and Coronavirus Relief Package Passed and Signed

On December 27, a \$1.4 trillion [spending deal for fiscal year 2021 \(FY21\)](#), with \$900 billion of [coronavirus relief](#) and a set of tax extenders and other tax measures, was signed into law. The package included \$25 billion for rental assistance, a 1-month extension to the CDC moratorium, and a permanent minimum 4% LIHTC rate, among other provisions.

President Elect Biden Chooses Congresswoman Marcia Fudge as HUD Secretary

On December 8, President-elect Joe Biden selected [Representative Marcia L. Fudge \(D-OH\) to serve as the Secretary of HUD](#) after serving Ohio's 11th Congressional district since 2008. If confirmed, Rep. Fudge would become the second Black woman to lead HUD.



Recent Research

NLIHC Releases Best Practices Report for State/Local Emergency Rental Assistance Programs

The [National Low Income Housing Coalition \(NLIHC\)](#) released a [report offering recommendations](#) on how state and local governments can equitably distribute their portion of the \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance. It recommends short, simple applications while targeting areas disproportionately impacted by housing instability and job loss.

JCHS Releases *The Rent Eats First* Report Exploring Rental Housing Unaffordability

The [Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies \(JCHS\)](#) released a [research paper](#) that examines rental housing unaffordability. Findings show that 19.2 million households (62% of working-age renters) do not have enough income to afford a modest standard of living after paying for rent and utilities each month.

Leading Age and National Housing Trust Release LIHTC Report on Senior Housing Production

[LeadingAge and the National Housing Trust released a report](#) examining how the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is used to produce and preserve affordable senior housing. The report finds that Massachusetts does not set aside a portion of LIHTC for affordable senior housing or provide a basis for projects serving older adults.

Enterprise and the NHP Foundation Find Many K-12 Students Face Housing Challenges

[Enterprise and The NHP Foundation released their joint research report](#) on the intersection between housing and education. Findings show that housing-related challenges among students are widespread and more than 1 in 3 educators do not know how to connect students experiencing housing challenges with necessary supports.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 14-28 2021
[CHAPA's Virtual Chapter 40B Conference](#)

January 22, 2021
[Affordable Housing Landscape in a New Administration](#)

ACTION ALERT

With only a few days left for the Governor to sign, we need your help to pass the Economic Development bill! [Please contact Governor Baker TODAY](#) and ask him to sign the bill with all housing provisions included.

CHAPA IN THE NEWS

January 11, 2021
[Zoning measure would require municipalities to allow higher-density housing near MBTA stations](#)

December 21, 2020
[COVID-19 Aid Deal Includes \\$25B for Renters, Eviction Moratorium Extension](#)

December 13, 2020
[Ejections are hitting hard in parts of Mass. where people are most vulnerable](#)

December 8, 2020
[It's incumbent on all of us to open our communities to affordable housing](#)

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